

[W. A. Boyter]

September 4, 1939

W.A. Boyter, Hotel Proprietor,

Newton, N.C.

Ethel Deal, Writer.

Dudley W. Crawford, Reviser. Original Names Changed Names

Virginia Shipp Hotel Alton Hotel

W.A. Boyter J.A. Burns

Spartanburg S.C. Sparta, S.C.

Statesville Inn Staton Inn

C.R. Adkins C.B. Morris

Newton Bakerton

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Mr. J.A. Burns, a distinguished looking man of about sixty five, has run the Alton Hotel at Bakerton for the past twenty years, and this is his life story.

“I was born in Sparta, South Carolina. My father was a section boss on the railroad. Naturally I took up the same work after finishing school. My means did not permit a college

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education. For several years I was section hand on the railroad. Later I became baggage master and worked at that for a good many years.

"I liked the railroad fine; guess I'd be there yet if I hadn't got married. I married a widow who was running the Staton Inn. We continued in the same business there for awhile before coming here. I've been here now twenty years and feel I'm a part of the town. Business is dull of courses but I make a living. There are so many boarding houses [mu?] my business suffers.

My expenses are higher than the boarding house keeper. The law requires me to pay privilege tax. That's fifty dollars. My bed linen has to be made to order as the sheet sheets have to be made long enough to tuck under the mattress as much as a foot and a half at both ends. That's to keep them from pulling out and to protect the mattress. Of course the linen is changed every day. All these are expenses the boarding house does not have.

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"You have to have a volume of business to make anything in the hotel. The automobile hurts the business. If a man is fifty miles from home its cheaper for him to go home and spend the night and come back the next day. Lot of people here in town come in and take their dinner. You always have to be prepared for extra guests. Sometimes there is a waste when they don't show up. I keep a record of everything and know exactly how much a meal costs we and how much I've made on it.

"This hotel has twenty rooms. and the dinning room seats fifteen people. In one way its a pleasure to run / a hotel; what I like about it is the social contact. I meet people from every part of the state , it is a pleasure to deal with some; others make a nuisance of themselves.

"A few weeks ago a man and his wife from Texas stopped with me. After registering and being shown to their room, the man was very much pleased, but the woman turned up her nose at everything and demanded that the bed lien be changed in her presence. Her

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husband tried to reason with her, and showed her the linen was fresh. That woman acted worse than the devil, nothing we could do seemed to please her. The help simply hated her. Her husband spent all his time trying to console her.

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"Now, there's Mr. C.B. Morris, he's a traveling salesman. He's been stopping with me for the past ten years. He is so nice to the help they run over each other trying to serve him; and he gets better service by being that way. I've had a lot of prominent men; Cabinet men from Washington, Governors, Senators business and professional men from various states.

"My rates are not high, a room with a bath is one fifty; one dollar for a room without bath. Meals fifty cents. I like Bakerton fine and I think I'll stay here. It's a good place to live; even if you can't make much money. I make a plenty to live on, besides running the hotel I do other things.

"The lobby of the hotel is used as a bus station, I fill the place of bus master and am also plumbing and electrical inspector for the town. I belong to the Methodist Church. I've never owned a home, and as long as I stay in the hotel business don't guess I will. I keep a car which is not much for looks but it answers the purpose of a good one.

"I am a strong Democrat and never fail to vote. I believe it's woman's right to vote. I firmly believe they have made politics cleaner. I can remember when election day was dreaded. No lady would be seen on the street that day. It was a day of fighting, drinking and foul language. Lots of men could be bought either 4 way for a drink of whiskey. I know the women can't be bought when they go to vote. The polls is a cleaner place for that reason. A hundred percent of the men will respect a lady even when he is drinking. Today on election day, you see more ladies out than any other day. The men still drink but they respect the ladies and they are not as easy bought as they used to be. I think our

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President is fine. He has made some mistakes of courses I hope he keeps us out of war and I am sure he will.

"I hope to live to a ripe old age and still be able to work. I don't have much ambition now. I get lonely at times since my wife is gone. I keep a lady here to look after things about the hotel and she is fine. The dietitian has entire charge of the food. The cooks take their orders from her. I would like you to see the lower floor, if you have time."

Everything was nice and well kept, justifying the pride with which the [?] proprietor showed me about the quaint old structure.